

Vol. 2, No. 3

December, 1937

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 2789961 4

Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

PS
8273
C512
v.2:no.3
1937

Augustana

\$2.00 a Year.

50c a Number



EX LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTENSIS

DISTINCTION!

A year's subscription (four issues) of the Canadian Poetry Magazine is a gift that would be highly prized by anyone interested in the development of our literature. Such a gift would express the discrimination of the giver as well as affording permanent satisfaction to the recipient, for into the improved and enlarged Canadian Poetry Magazine of the present goes the best of that current poetry which is our literature in the making. . . .

Every subscriber and contributor undoubtedly has a friend who would value highly such a gift at this season. Send a subscription to friends who are abroad, Canadians with occupations in foreign lands, or others keenly interested in this true expression of our national culture. . . .

\$2.00 per year.

50c per copy.

CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE,
P.O. Box 491, Station F, Toronto.

Canadian
POETRY
MAGAZINE

VOLUME 2

No. 3—DECEMBER, 1937

PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
CANADIAN AUTHORS' ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 491, STATION F, TORONTO

The Canadian Poetry Magazine

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE issued under the auspices of the Canadian Authors' Association for the encouragement and development of Canadian verse.

Annual Subscription, two dollars; single copy, fifty cents.

All contributions accepted will be paid for at a page rate set by the Committee.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be enclosed, if return of manuscript is desired.

Individual criticism of submitted verse cannot be undertaken by the magazine.

* * *

Notice of Awards

THE Tweedsmuir Award—a medal—the gift of His Excellency the Governor-General, will be given to the poem adjudged the best over the four issues of the magazine for each year.

The "Seranus Memorial Prize" of twenty-five dollars, the gift of Mrs. Margaret M. Howard, will be awarded to the winner of the Tweedsmuir Medal.

In addition, there will be three prizes of fifteen, ten, and five dollars awarded for the best poems in each issue as selected by the Advisory Council.

PRIZES

FOR THE OCTOBER NUMBER

First —*A Song of the Admirals*, Robina Monkman, Toronto.

Second—*Forest Music*, Doris Ferne, Victoria, B.C.

Third —*Two Poems*, Charles Bruce, formerly of Halifax, now of Toronto.

Address all correspondence to Canadian Poetry Magazine, Post Office Box, No. 491, Station F, Toronto, Ontario.

AUGUSTANA LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Canadian Poetry Night	5
The Programme	<i>William Arthur Deacon</i> 5
Introduction	<i>Pelham Edgar</i> 8
Return to Masterpieces	<i>Lord Tweedsmuir</i> 9
Conclusion	<i>Leslie Gordon Barnard</i> 21
Wheat and Barley	<i>Annie Charlotte Dalton</i> 24
Two Poems	<i>Gordon LeClaire</i> 30
The Everlasting Trumpets	<i>Fred E. Laight</i> 32
Prairie Autumn	<i>Clara E. Hill</i> 36
Prairie Candles	<i>Ella M. Davis</i> 36
Cold Night	<i>Freda McArton</i> 37
At Home to November	<i>Kathryn Munro</i> 38
What's in a Name?	<i>Gloria Lauriston</i> 38
Sea Sand	<i>Elizabeth Donaldson</i> 40
Accent Reserved	<i>T. Negoro</i> 40
Elinor	<i>A. Gwendolen Merrin</i> 41
Bread	<i>D. L. Saunders</i> 42
In Memoriam Patris	<i>Nathaniel A. Benson</i> 44
Magic	<i>Miriam Dorne</i> 47
Self-Sculpture	<i>Stella Falk</i> 48
Through a Tangle	<i>Jessie Playfair Bickford</i> 49
Tide Spell	<i>Anne Marriott</i> 51
Acolyte	<i>Joyce Marshall</i> 52
To a Young Man Ploughing near an old Burying-Lot	<i>Ella H. Eckel</i> 52
To a Young Lady	<i>Lawrence A. Anderson</i> 53
Gratefully	<i>E. V. Shute</i> 53
The Ocean Lies Between	<i>Hilma Parsons</i> 54
Song	<i>Margaret E. McGregor</i> 54
Nocturne	<i>Florence Westacott</i> 55

THE Canadian Authors' Association established the Canadian Poetry Magazine to stimulate the production of fine verse in Canada. Volume I was made possible through the generosity of Foundation Supporters.

We are in our second year and we feel that we have gone beyond the development stage. We have discovered that high-grade ore exists, but we need your continued support to produce it. If you believe that in the highest sense we cannot nationally exist without a great poetry, you will strengthen us by your financial support. You are invited to assist by contributing to a fund for the production of Volume 2.

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS FOR VOLUME 2:

W. M. Southam, Ottawa; F. R. MacKelcan, Toronto; Sir Jos. Chisholm, Halifax; Charles A. Birge, Toronto; Louis Blake Duff, Welland; Henry F. Munro, Halifax; Dr. Jacob Markowitz, Toronto; Mrs. L. A. Lefevre, Vancouver; Mrs. Margaret M. Howard, Toronto; John Murray Gibbon, Montreal; P. D. Ross, Ottawa; H. S. Southam, Ottawa; Mrs. Dorothy Tait, Toronto; Mrs. J. B. de Pencier, Owen Sound; The Poetry Group of the Victoria and Islands Group of the C.A.A.; Albert H. Robson, Toronto.

Others who have indicated their interest by making donations are: Sir Frederick G. Banting, Toronto; Miss Lily E. F. Barry, Montreal; Calgary Branch, C.A.A.; Mrs. Annie C. Dalton, Vancouver; Wm. Arthur Deacon, Toronto; Mr. Lewis Duncan, K.C., Toronto; Miss Mary S. Edgar, Toronto; Miss Ellen M. Fulton, Little Harbor, N.S.; Mrs. J. J. Gibbons, Toronto; Mrs. C. D'A. Henderson, Victoria; Carl H. Hunter, Toronto; J. F. B. Livesay, Clarkson; Col. H. C. Osborne, Ottawa; Dr. Lorne Pierce, Toronto; B. K. Sandwell, Toronto.

ALBERT H. ROBSON,
Honorary Chairman,
Business Executive.

The Canadian Poetry M A G A Z I N E

VOL. 2, No. 3

DECEMBER, 1937

EDITOR: E. J. Pratt. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AWARDS: E. K. Brown, F. O. Call, William Arthur Deacon, Pelham Edgar, R. K. Gordon, J. M. Lothian, S. Morgan-Powell, V. B. Rhodenizer, Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, G. G. Sedgewick, F. W. Tamblyn.

BUSINESS EXECUTIVE—A. H. Robson, Lewis Duncan, Nathaniel Benson.

CANADIAN POETRY NIGHT

AS so many subscribers to the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* have written the editor asking for a complete description of the programme presented in Convocation Hall, Toronto, on November 24, we take great pleasure in acceding to the request. The Governor-General's address was desired, not in annotated excerpts or summary, but in its verbatim composition. This, through Lord Tweedsmuir's courtesy, we are happy to reproduce in the present number. We are also publishing the introductory speech of Professor Pelham Edgar, the concluding remarks of Mr. Leslie Barnard, National President of the Canadian Authors' Association, and the general review of the evening by Mr. William Arthur Deacon, Literary Editor of the *Globe and Mail*, Toronto.

THE PROGRAMME

WILLIAM ARTHUR DEACON

If we could have brought back a John Garvin or a John D. Logan to witness the crowds in Convocation Hall on Wednesday evening, November 24, he would have been amazed at the great and brilliant gathering there met in the name of Canadian

poetry, and sponsored by a dignified little quarterly. The *Canadian Poetry Magazine* is probably the only periodical in the world that would attempt a platform entertainment for its subscribers, and certainly the only one which could lure a vice-roy to that platform to become the chief entertainer.

These results were obtained by a committee of half a dozen members, resolute to place the magazine on its feet, and enabled to carry out an ambitious scheme by the generous aid of the Governor-General and Her Excellency, the Lady Tweedsmuir, together with sundry other persons and institutions. The University of Toronto kindly lent the Hall to us, who could not afford rent. Some items from the programme are reproduced in this number; but so many participated and the evening was of such historic significance that it has been thought well to leave here a permanent record of personalities and proceedings.

To begin properly one should enumerate the audience, which included Sir Robert Falconer, Principal Malcolm Wallace, Dr. Salem Bland, and a host of notables far too lengthy for our space. As Chairman of the Management Committee of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, Professor Pelham Edgar introduced the Governor-General. Both speeches are quoted in full. Sir Charles G. D. Roberts then read his poem, "In the Night Watches", followed by Mr. Wilson MacDonald, who read "The Song of the Ski".

Mrs. Myrtle Bruce-Brown concluded this part of the programme by singing (accompanied by Miss Hermine Keller) Leo Smith's settings for "Imogen's Wish" by Duncan Campbell Scott and "The Dressmakers" by Millicent Payne (now Mrs. Bridgett of Dauphin, Manitoba). Next, Dr. E. J. Pratt read three poems—"Silences", "The Prize Cat", and "Like Mother, Like Daughter". Dr. Edgar then announced that the Lawrence Park School, winner of the \$100 prize library for highest proportional attendance at the recent Toronto Book Fair, had intimated to the donors, the Association of Canadian Bookmen,

that it would choose Canadian books exclusively, half of them in value to be Canadian poetry.

Winners of the first medals under the Governor-General's Annual Literary Awards, arranged by the Canadian Authors' Association, were at this point introduced to the audience and received medals and congratulations from His Excellency. Mr. Bertram Brooker received the fiction medal for his novel, *Think of the Earth*, while the late T. B. Robertson, posthumous winner of the general literature medal for *T.B.R., Newspaper Pieces* was represented by his son, Mr. George Robertson of Winnipeg.

Mrs. Emma Benson presented a bouquet of roses to Lady Tweedsmuir with the best wishes of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Her Excellency, in accordance with the wish of the late Mrs. M. M. Howard, presented the Seranus Memorial Prize of \$25 for the best poem in Volume One of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* to Professor George Herbert Clarke of Queen's University. Professor Clarke read the latter half of the winning poem, "Hymn to the Spirit Eternal". This part of the programme closed with two further musical renderings of poems, both by Norah Holland and set to music by Dr. Healey Willan.

Mrs. John Garvin (Katherine Hale) then read "Eternal Moment", "Portrait of a Cree", and "Discovery"; and Mr. Nathaniel A. Benson read "Icarus, 1937", "The Kiss", "Late Spring", Sonnet 18 of the "Eleanora Sequence", "The Solitary", and "Canada". As National President of the Canadian Authors' Association, proprietors and publishers of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, Mr. Leslie Gordon Barnard of Montreal spoke a concluding word by way of appreciation, leading to a plea for subscriptions, donations, and an endowment fund. The playing of "O Canada" concluded an evening unique in Canadian literary annals.

INTRODUCTION

PELHAM EDGAR

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is our privilege to-night to hear an address on Poetry from a great man of letters,—a master of prose, and whatever his own disclaimer may be, a skilful craftsman in the sister art of verse. He speaks to us, therefore, not only with the authority of his high office, but with the knowledge also, and the discernment, of a proved expert in the most honourable profession of literature. Our Canadian Authors' Association is already deeply in His Excellency's debt. He has instituted Governor-General's Annual Awards for Literature, and will to-night present the awards for the year 1936. He has more particularly shown his interest in the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* by announcing a Tweedsmuir medal for the best single poem to appear in the second volume of the magazine.

We feel, your Excellencies, that the Association was justified in founding this national magazine. Feeble poetry is an offence against society, but great poetry is the most important intellectual asset a country can possess. In spite of isolated views to the contrary, poetry is still the core of our Canadian literature, its past significant, its future rich in promise. I hesitate to say that the magazine has to the present published any poetry that can be designated as great, but I am equally emphatic that we have published nothing bad, and the level is surprisingly high. In some future number you will find a poem that will run round the world.

I have now the pleasure and the honour to ask His Excellency, Lord Tweedsmuir, to address us.

RETURN TO MASTERPIECES

LORD TWEEDSMUIR

1

A year ago, in this very city, and to an audience much the same as this, I made a plea for a catholic taste in reading. I urged my hearers not to be too academic in their selection, not to keep only to the main roads of letters, but to amuse themselves in the by-paths. I still adhere to that view. It is enormous fun to browse at large over the wide domain of literature, and one may pick up some surprising treasures in unlikely places. In the last two centuries, for example, there have been many minor poets who wrote in the Scots vernacular, most of them uncommonly bad. But even in the worst of them you can find an occasional verse of singular beauty. I have tried to collect some of these unexpected jewels in an anthology, which I prepared some years ago, called *The Northern Muse*.

Let me give you two other illustrations. There was a fifteenth-century English poet called John Lydgate, a disciple of Chaucer and one of the prosiest of God's creatures. But Lydgate in a love poem could write a verse like this—

And as I stoode myself alloone upon the Nuwe Yere night,
I prayed unto the frosty moone, with her pale light,
 To go and recomaunde me unto my lady dere.
And erly on the next morrowe, kneling in my cloos
I preyed eke the shene sonne, the houre whane he aroos,
 To goon also and sey the same in his bemys clere.

Listen to this also. It is on the subject of Lady Jane Grey—

Like her most gentle, most unfortunate,
Crown'd but to die—who in her chamber sate
Musing with Plato, though the horn was blown,
And every ear and every heart was won,
And all in green array went chasing down the sun.

That is the work of Samuel Rogers, a banker and a minor poet at the beginning of last century, whom Lord Rosebery has described, not unfairly, as a "hedgehog soul".

But to-night I want to emphasize the other side. The backwaters have their charm, but we must not forget the main stream, the central tide of poetry. My plea is for a return to a proper respect for, and a more intimate knowledge of, the great masterpieces, the work of the primary creative minds.

I propose to take the narrower definition of poetry. Poetry and prose are not antithetical words, for there may be great poetry in great prose. The French word *poésie* is frequently applied to prose compositions. You remember Sir Philip Sidney's words, "It is not rhyming and versifying that maketh poesy. One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without Poetry." The true differentiation is between prose on the one hand and verse or metre on the other. But for our purpose to-day I propose to take poetry in the narrower sense, as involving some kind of ordered rhythmical pattern—what, if printed in the ordinary prose fashion, would lose something of its effect.

How shall we define a masterpiece, a classic? I suppose by its enduring charm, for age does not wither it, and by its universal appeal, which is not limited by race or nationality. To take only the great literatures, I mean by master poets Homer and Aeschylus and Sophocles; I mean Lucretius and Horace and Virgil; I mean Dante; I mean Racine and Corneille and Victor Hugo; I mean Chaucer and Shakespeare; Milton and Dryden; Wordsworth and Coleridge; Shelley and Keats; Matthew Arnold (though some of my hearers may differ from me), and Tennyson and Browning.

My plea is timely, I think, for to-day there is a tendency to forget about the masters, or to treat them disrespectfully. Too many of our contemporaries are like impudent little boys who amuse themselves by making faces at their betters. For this fashion there are several reasons. One is that to-day, while there is an inordinate number of clever writers, there is a remarkable and admitted dearth of great ones, both in English and in French literature. I am old enough to remem-

ber Tennyson's death. When I was a young man we had Swinburne and Robert Bridges alive in England, and Hardy and Meredith and Ruskin. Less than two years ago with Kipling died the last of the writers of the larger stature. It is the same in France since the death of Proust and Anatole France. There may be stupendous geniuses growing up in the world, but they have not yet revealed themselves. We live in a day of small things. We fail in respect to the bigger things, because we are not producing them.

Another reason is the impatience, the natural impatience, of our somewhat disintegrated youth. This inevitably tends to a kind of sansculottism. I am not inclined to describe these young men in the words of the poet as

Feeble and restless youths, born to inglorious days.

Feeble is not the right word for them, and there is both pathos and promise in their disquiet, but they are indubitably restless.

In their attitude to the great things of the past they have what is called in the jargon of to-day, an inferiority complex, with its inevitable converse, a superiority complex. They are perturbed by the spectacle of something beyond their compass and find consolation in affecting to despise it, like some Greek of the decadence who chipped away the nose of a marble statue in order to make the Goths laugh. We have many cases to-day of an easy notoriety won by belittling great reputations. If you declare that Wordsworth as a poet was much inferior to some hitherto unknown person called Snooks, whom you have discovered, you make people stop to listen to you and you flatter your own vanity, for you know that while you are a long way from Wordsworth, you are pretty much on a level with Snooks. So the attitude of these unfortunates to the masterpieces in poetry is very much that described in the first lines of Browning's "Grammarians' Funeral"—

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.

They are like the French Romantics at the beginning of last century whose cry was "Qui nous délivra des Grecs et des Romains?"—Who will deliver us from the tyranny of the great classics? They want to get rid of them, to bury them ceremonially, for their calm perfection is a standing reproach.

There is a third reason, and a more honourable one. Those iconoclasts are not as a rule very well read, and therefore they have not the just perspective which is given by a wide acquaintance with great literature. But they *feel* acutely. They are highly sensitive to the difficulties and discontents of our time. They demand in poetry a personal and topical note, an immediate contemporary appeal. They see no value in what they call the poetry of "escape". So we find in our younger school of poets at home two interesting features. We live, they say, in a mechanical age, so they crowd their verse with technological phrases and exult in the complexities of machinery. Again, they say, we live in an age of social unrest, and unless a poet has on this point a direct message, a new gospel of social regeneration, he is a mere cumberer of the ground.

I feel a good deal of sympathy with their view. No great poetry can be deaf to the "still sad music of humanity". It cannot ignore what Wordsworth calls—

the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities.

It must have some gospel for mortal needs and mortal aspirations. But to ask from it a narrow political or economic faith is to wrong its majesty. What is proudly called "left-wing poetry" should often, to my mind, be more properly described as "half-baked poetry". Those writers, as Dr. Chalmers said of Thomas Carlyle, "prefer seriousness to truth", and they have the wrong definition of seriousness. Their ears are dulled by the rattle of machinery, and their perspective blurred by factory chimneys. They condemn the literature of escape, but in a true sense all good literature

seeks escape, escape from the dust of the trivial, the partisan, the transient, to a clearer air and a wider landscape. I remember when I was very young that many elegant poets, like Austin Dobson, were concerned with fabricating pretty playthings in exotic forms of verse, like the French *rondeau* and *ballade*. A pleasant backwater, but one remote from the great tidal streams of poetry. But the poets of to-day are just as remote when, in cacophonous verse, they attempt the role of propagandists. The only difference is that their backwater is an uglier one, comparable not to a pleasant reach of the upper Thames, but to one of the dismal creeks on the Essex side of London, where scraps of rusty machinery litter the unlovely shores.

2

“Who will deliver us from the Greeks and Romans?” The answer is no one, if by the Greeks and Romans we mean the greater masterpieces of literature. They enshrine things permanent and universal. They have a largeness and rightness, both in thought and style, which no change in literary fashion can affect. They do not preach a specific creed; but, in Shelley’s words, they “repeal large codes of fraud and woe”. They dignify life because they link it with the eternal. They make the world at once more solemn and more sunny, brighter and more spacious—

Hesperus with the hosts of Heaven came,
And lo! Creation widen’d in man’s view.

I would suggest to you two reasons why a people should live in close contact with masterpieces. The first concerns its character and its mind. There is a passage in the treatise which we call *Longinus on the Sublime* which is worth remembering. “It is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality. Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts

are deep and grave." The converse of this is equally true, and it is with that converse that we are concerned. "Great accents", "thoughts deep and grave" in the literature of a nation will produce gravity and dignity both in the character and in the speech of the ordinary citizen.

Let me give you examples. Take the Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ. Their thought and speech were interpenetrated with the poetry of Homer. They quoted him as our fathers used to quote the Bible. Plato, who objected, you remember, to poets as a class, manages to quote Homer more than 150 times. Who shall say how much this influence determined the speech, the thought, and the character of Athens in her great days?

Take the Irish peasantry. No one can go among them without noting the curious beauty and elevation of the speech of many old people who never had any schooling in their lives. Where did they get it? Partly from the offices of their Church, and partly from the folk-tales and folk-poetry which an Education Department has not yet expelled from their memories.

Take our own people in Britain and throughout the Empire. There is one masterpiece which for more than three centuries has been their constant study—the English translation of the Bible. It has influenced their lives, it has dominated their thoughts, and it has coloured their speech. I fear that to-day the Bible is not read as it used to be. I leave the Churches to say how this neglect may affect the soul of our nation, but I am very certain that it will have a malign consequence for our thought and speech. Familiarity with the noble rhythms of the Authorized Version made the plain man, in a moment of emotion, a great orator; I would instance Sir Arthur Currie's address to the Canadian troops in the crisis of April, 1918. It enabled an unlettered man like John Bunyan to produce in his *Pilgrim's Progress* a book which, apart from its other merits, is a well of undefiled English. It gave the speech of

our people, gentle and simple alike, the Roman virtues of *gravitas* and *pietas*. If the Bible should go out of the national memory and its place be taken by the jargon of a crude popular science, or the jingles and captions of popular forms of entertainment, then what a fall would be there, my countrymen!

As a last example I would take my own people of the Scottish Border. There, ever since the days of John Knox, there has been a certain level of education. Two things were in the possession of everyone, the Bible and the Ballads. To have them in their memory meant that they had a treasure-house of great literature behind them, for the Ballads are often great literature. James Hogg, in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, has shown how real a thing the Bible was in the life of the Border peasant. He made it the lamp of his path, and at family prayers communed frankly with his Maker. He revered the Bible, but the spirit of critical independence was not absent, and he was under no blind bondage to its letter. Hogg tells us that he would stop his reading of it with the remark, "If it hadna been the Lord's will, that verse had been better left out". But its august visions and its noble prose gave dignity to his life, and from the ballads of the countryside he drew also a wild poetry. I have heard plain folk in the upper glens of Tweed and Ettrick use in their ordinary speech phrases and metaphors which were a key to a whole world of mystery and imagination. Sir Walter Scott knew this, and, as was said of him, he "made his kail with other men's groats". When he makes his peasants, Meg Merrilees and Edie Ochiltree and Jeanie Deans, speak with a moving eloquence, he is not romancing. He had heard such words in moments of high tension on the lips of the unlearned, and, though less commonly, we may still hear them to-day.

3

The second reason I would suggest for the study of masterpieces is a literary one. They give us a standard of values.

Matthew Arnold, you remember, was fond of taking certain famous lines of poetry as touchstones, and using them to test the quality of work about which he was in doubt. I think perhaps that he rather overdid the practice. A single line or verse seems to me to be too narrow a measure. It may do as a test of melody or rhythm, but scarcely for the rarer qualities of poetry.

But Matthew Arnold's principle is right. Every lover of poetry should be also a critic if he is to have full enjoyment of it, and the meaning of criticism is simply intelligent comparison. That is to say, before a man can be said to have developed a critical faculty he must have read the masterpieces and have his memory stored with good literature. It seems to me that the chief defect of our criticism to-day is that the critics are so ignorant. They have read so little that they have no proper standards of comparison. Almost every week they discover a masterpiece in prose or verse. No doubt that is a proof of a friendly and generous spirit, and it is a good deal better than a perpetual *dénigration*. Tennyson, you remember, did the same thing. I have been re-reading lately the letters of Edward Fitzgerald, and I find that Tennyson was almost too appreciative of the merits of his contemporaries. He discovered, for example, sublimity in an epic called *Festus* by one Philip James Bailey, produced in the sixties of last century, a deplorable work which is now deservedly forgotten. But, at the same time, too much critical complaisance is a danger, for it debases the critical currency. When we read that some vast, shapeless, modern novel must rank among the great masterpieces of fiction, let us test the judgment by casting our minds back to the best of Balzac, to *The Heart of Midlothian*, or to *Vanity Fair*, or to *Middlemarch*. When we are told that some piece of tortured obscurity in verse is unparalleled since Donne, well, let us recall Donne, who is cited to-day more than he is read. When some limp lyric is praised as "sheer beauty"—a favourite phrase of our critics—let

us test it by "The Grecian Urn", or the best of Shelley or Landor. Only thus shall we keep our heads straight and our palates clean for true appreciation.

This intelligent comparison is especially important when we are dealing with work which enshrines the special and peculiar genius of a literature. I should define this genius in every case as a particular kind of simplicity which is untranslatable into any other form of speech. It is the last word in inevitability; alter a syllable and you spoil it. It is the thrill which is incommunicable by any other collocation of words. The high-coloured, the artificial, the elaborate, the rhetorical can be rendered easily enough in translation. You can get the quality of Demosthenes more or less in English, but not of Plato; of Apollonius Rhodius, but not of Homer; of much of Euripides, but very little of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Ovid and Lucan can be adequately translated, but scarcely Horace, and emphatically not Catullus and Virgil. You can reproduce Bossuet successfully in English, but not Pascal; Victor Hugo, but not François Villon or Racine.

This alembicated and distilled simplicity is to my mind the highest quality of literature, and, since it is indefinable, a thing which can be felt and not explained, we can only recognize it by the method of comparison, by using as a touchstone the great examples of it. To-day there is a good deal of bogus simplicity about. Our poets are inclined to think that they attain inevitability by letting their thoughts and impressions pour out in a congested mass, by opening their mouths, like Balaam's ass, for Providence to fill with words. But crudity is not simplicity. The simplicity of genius is achieved only by much searching and by a strenuous discipline. M. Jourdain, you remember, in Molière's play, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, was amazed to discover that all his life he had talked prose without knowing it. He was quite wrong; he never talked prose; for prose, in any serious sense, is an artistic construction—words, as someone has defined it, in the best order.

Poetry, to continue the definition, is the best words in the best order, and the greatest poetry is the only possible words in the only possible order. You can shake up most of our modern simplicities in a hat, and the result would be just as good; with the great simplicities you cannot alter an inflexion or a letter.

Turn to Shakespeare. I have always regarded the songs in the plays as the high-water mark of lyrical beauty. Their content is very simple—obvious, if you like; their music is far from elaborate. But attempt to put them in any other form and they will be either ridiculous or banal. Let us try. Here is “Sigh no more, Ladies”, as rendered by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch into the stilted language which we usually reserve for translations from the classics—

I enjoin upon the adult female population, not once but twice,
that there be from this time forward a total cessation of sighing.
The male is, and has been, constantly addicted to inconstancy,
treading the ocean and the mainland respectively with alternate feet.

Here is the greatest of them all, “O! Mistress Mine” in the debased speech of a Hollywood film—a little effort of my own—

Huh! Sweetie, where you gettin' to?
Your big boy's here and pettin' you,
And he's the guy that rings the bell.
Say, kid, quit hikin' and sit nice,
For shakin' feet don't cut no ice,
The goopiest mutt can tell.

Both, mark you, are faithful renderings; in both the trite thought is expressed with extreme simplicity; but it is the wrong kind of simplicity.

Take again almost the greatest lines which he ever wrote—

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

There is nothing recondite in the thought. It has been a

platitude since the days of the Book of Job. There is nothing recondite about the language. It is composed of short, simple words which we use every day. Wherein then lies the secret? Ah! that we cannot tell. The alchemy of genius has compounded those simple ingredients into something inimitable and immortal. It is a jewel, in the glow of which most of our shallow modern simplicities shrivel and fade.

4

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have given you my text, and now I come to what old-fashioned preachers used to call the application. The object of this meeting to-night is to foster an interest in Canadian poetry. That purpose has all my sympathy, for it is on poetry that we must build the foundations of that distinguished contribution which I believe Canada is destined to make to the literature of the world. Poetry is the earliest and most natural expression of the spirit of man, for it represents primarily an instinct, whereas prose is a considered affair which demands a more elaborate background. Great verse, in Keats' words, can be left to a little clan, but prose belongs to a more complex society. Two centuries before the Greeks developed their wonderful prose Sappho was writing immortal lyrics, and still earlier Homer had produced immortal epics. Therefore, it seems to me, this land of ours which, though it has a long history behind it, is still fortunate to be in the making, must look to poetry as the primary expression of its natural culture. You have already produced good poets, and to-day I recognize with pride the reality of your poetic impulse.

I want to see that impulse create its own idiom. The weakness, I think, of the poetry hitherto produced by the overseas Empire is that it has been too apt to borrow its idioms from the home country. Australian poetry, for all its admirable vigour, has in the past been inclined, even in the case of Adam Lindsay Gordon, to put its new wine into old bottles, and to sing

of an unconventional world in conventional jingles. The same thing was once true of South Africa, though it is scarcely true to-day. Every part of the Commonwealth should have its own idiom, and I want to see Canada provide its special version, and not borrow it from elsewhere. The modes in which English poets have sung of the English tradition and of the mellow English landscape, are not those best fitted for our prairies and forests and mountains and northern wilds, or for a young and adventurous people. Canada must make her own music. What is wanted, in the words of the Scriptures, is a "new song to the Lord".

But, at the same time, let us remember that great literature is one and indivisible. The master singers have an appeal which is permanent and universal, as real to us here as to ancient Athens and Rome, to the England of Elizabeth or the France of Louis XIV. No nation can cut itself off from the past. We must have a criterion of value, standards by which to test our ventures, an inspiration to link the new and old, the known and the unknown. Before a spearman can cast a spear he must have firm ground to stand on. If the fisherman is to make a good forward cast he must first make a good back cast. To hold up our heads in a new world it is advisable to have a patent of nobility from an old world. But enough of these mixed metaphors! The moral I would point is very simple. In a country like ours, where our task is to force audacious novelties into the bonds of art, we need especially the masterpieces, which do not date, and whose appeal is to all humanity. They will provide that austere canon to which our new idioms must conform if they are to endure; that eternal background which will at once inspire and dignify our own reading of life.

CONCLUSION

LESLIE GORDON BARNARD

Your Excellencies, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The *Canadian Poetry Magazine* is a child of the Canadian Authors' Association. I think I had the privilege of seconding the motion that put this experiment beyond the point of mere pious resolution; and I feel honoured and elated to have the opportunity of this brief word at the conclusion of a memorable evening.

To those interested in the cause of Canadian letters, and especially of Canadian poetry, this has been a most heartening occasion. I doubt if a rally of this sort would have been possible even a few years ago.

It is part, I believe, of a movement wider than our own boundaries: a movement not organized nor planned—because such mechanics can be deadly—that is making men turn to things of the spirit; a hunger that can be found these days in strange and encouraging places.

To-night, as Dr. Edgar has said, those who had faith in a national magazine of poetry may well feel their faith justified. There have been moments when we have doubted that the child would live; but help was near. It came from guarantors, who assisted at birth; from those (editors, business managers, advisors) who guided its destiny—no light task! It came from subscribers who by their subscriptions to the magazine nourished it in its circulation; yet I doubt if, even so, there could have been survival had higher aid not been at hand. I need scarcely say that I allude to the instant and generous support of His Excellency, the Lord Tweedsmuir, to whose words we have just listened with a sense that Canadian literary history was in the making.

From coast to coast there are many organizations and causes—covering interests of the widest variety and importance in the

national scene—to which a veritable torch has been brought by the distinguished speaker of this evening. I have met men from many walks of life who have spoken with warmest appreciation of what Lord Tweedsmuir's public addresses have meant to their organizations and to themselves personally. Not least of all do we (who love books and those offices of the spirit of which books are the symbol)—not least of all, I say, do we have cause to thank His Excellency.

And may I here couple in this tribute to an exacting and unstinted ministry the name of Her Excellency, the Lady Tweedsmuir. It seems to me that almost every newspaper I pick up records some encouragement from her—in public address or private act—towards what I like to call “the happy contagion of books”.

Their Excellencies' patronage of all worthy efforts for the advancement of the cause of literature in Canada has been notable—whether in the matter of Book Fairs (and I wish I could convey to you the thrill we are getting out of our first Book Fair now running in Montreal) or in allying themselves sympathetically and helpfully with organizations of writers and book-lovers.

A torch has been brought to us to-night. A glow has been lit in us. We have been addressed greatly, as we knew in advance we should be. We have had a number of our poets with us; have seen them and heard them, and applauded them.

But there is a point that deeply concerns us. It is heart-breaking to see how precarious is the existence of many of the things that matter most in life. We can find money for material defence, but how much for that which will garrison our spirits; we can find money for motor-cars and railroad travel, but how much for what Mr. E. M. Forster would call “the Celestial Omnibus”?

I cherish the hope that some one, or some few, will happily astonish us with an endowment fund that will put beyond its

present insecurities this magazine for enshrining and encouraging Canadian verse. We believe that new and old friends will stand by us with special aid.

But the life-blood of any magazine—poetical or otherwise—depends upon its circulation. So we thank those—and there are many here—whose names are on our subscription lists. We entertain a hope at once wistful and vigorous that to-night will see many more homes (and dare I include your own?) opened to the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, so that this child of ours may presently walk and run unaided. I know of no way in which you could better capture and perpetuate this historic occasion.

And now, Your Excellency, may I, on behalf of the Canadian Authors' Association; and of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*; and of this great audience to-night, thank you most warmly for your generosity in coming to us and allowing us, during this memorable hour, to feel about us the beat of those wings to which, in a feverish and mechanistic age, we are not always sensitive.

The *Canadian Poetry Magazine* has suffered a great loss in the recent passing of Mrs. Margaret M. Howard. Mrs. Howard was a loyal friend of this publication: she established the Seranus Memorial Prize and was a generous contributor to the magazine's sustaining fund.

WHEAT AND BARLEY

"Tell me my name" saith the Wind

—*The Book of the Dead*

THE WHEAT

"Tell me my name,"

Saith the Wheat,

"Tell me my name."

With no respite

At noon, at night—

And with the morning light

It is the same—

"Tell me my name,"

Saith the Wheat,

"Tell me my name."

Your name—it is "Life"—

"*What is that?*" It is true.

Your name—it is "Death"—

"*What is that?*" It is true,

Strength and sweetness and bitterness are in you.

* * *

I am the Sacred Corn, my name—

"Gift of the Gods" is my name, my birth—

Straight from the Fields of the Gods I came

Nothing had I to do with the earth;

Past the Iron Gates of the Sky I grew,

Past the Sycamore Pillars of turquoise blue,

To the height and glory of cubits seven

Before I fell from the Fields of Heaven,

Before some Master of the Harvest shook

My golden berries, glittering gleanings, down—

Perchance the heavenly tally he mistook

And pondering with uncertain frown,
Saw, flying from his upcurled hands my rain,
My saffron shower of falling grain,
For well he knew
The vails and custom of the chance he threw,
The cheer, the civilizing sorrow sown
By me to Nile or Euphrates and Tigris blown.

* * *

I am the Wheat, Isis found me,
Took me and bound me,
And when she strove
To show the world her faithful love,
I was the guerdon that she gave
To Pharaoh, overseer, and slave.

I am the Wheat. Horus knew me,
In Aarru grew me
Seven cubits high,
I gave the word to live or die
To waiting spirits faint to see
The greatness of their destiny.

I am the Wheat. Osiris named me,
On earth proclaimed me;
Three cubits tall
I was in Heaven—desired of all—
Pure souls who there partook of me
Entered into Eternity.

* * *

The sad Egyptian heart
Longing for immortality in Heaven,
Prayed for the wonder of my cubits seven,
And for the glory of my cubits three
He worshipped me—

I was to him of Death a part,
He loved his Life so well he could not bear
To think of Heaven and I not there;
I was the sacred Meal, his hope the Leaven,
He prayed as one who understands his prayer:
—Harvest on earth, when that was over
Like-harvesting in Heaven he would recover—
And I, at times, more than assurance gave,
I went with him into his lonely grave.
There, shut away from tawny Nile
To rest a while,
No funeral-chest the faithful might seclude,
He could go hence and whither he would.
He could go hence. Life touched his heart anew.
Down in the Netherworld where nothing grew—
Where all things grew—the Lords of Truth arraigned him,
And he with joy to them drew near,
With written spell and charm he had nought to fear,
His heart was pure, his heart maintained him.
He knew
The Words of Power, the Litanies, the Prayers,
And what base thing could take him unawares?
The courteous Gods he first on earth obeyed,
To him returns of Life and healing made.

* * *

Calmly he walked his fragrant fields once more,
And stood beside his own palm-sheltered door,
His pleasant kinsfolk welcomed him with cries;
Before his jealous foes' averted eyes,
Proudly he drove his golden chariot, called
His war-trained lions panting for the chase,
His slaves bowed down before his shining face,
Princes and people came to him enthralled.

He was a King again, a Lord
Of Life and Death ; he made decrees ;
And for his grave-deliverance poured
Wheat-offerings from his granaries.
He felt again the freshening North wind blow
From that Green Sea where scarlet triremes go,
He saw in Julian skies
The might of sacred Sothis rise ;
He saw the Tears of Isis fall,
To swell the Nile's returning tides,
He heard the thankful sowers call
To her, and piteous things besides.
He watched the young crops unconfined
Rippling and tossing on the wind ;
He saw and heard the reaper's sickle sweeping,
The tender limbs of lost Osiris torn,
The plaintive lamentation, good men weeping
The murdered Spirit of the Corn ;
And as the sacred Festival went on
Folk cried for comfort, finding none,
Beating the breast, for widowed Isis kneeled
To her, the Goddess of the wheat-rich field.
He was a King again, a Lord
Of Life and Death ; he made decrees ;
And for his grave-deliverance poured
Wheat-offerings from his granaries ;
And worshipped her, the pure, the good,
The Benefactress of the Flood,
The Lady of Bread, of all things green—
His hope for Spring, his harvest Queen.

* * *

And whether he returned to the earth or made
A joyful journey to the Elysian Fields,

I was there; I awaited him; I stayed
His heart with food; and whether I was grown
Where heavenly Aarru's Garden yields
Unfading bloom,
Or in the Nile-flood valley sown,
In Tuat, temple, star, or tomb,
I was a food for Gods, I fed
The Kings of Heaven with holy Bread;
Lords of Eternity
Grew strong by me.
Reap, Train of Horus, reap!
Mine is a secret Name to keep
Of men unknown
And shall be for this time unshown—
Enough, enough, do I repeat,
"I am the Heaven-born Corn,
I am the Wheat!"

THE BARLEY

I am the White Corn,
I am the Red Corn, the Bread and the Beer!
I am the Barley and great Ishtar found me;
The Master of the Harvest tried me and proved me.
The glorious Kings of Mesopotamia loved me;
Queens praised me, from golden bowls they drank of me;
The royal courtiers of the Good Land blessed me,
They took their silver lyres and sang of me;
The labourers in the fields rejoiced in me,
They rested from their toil and sang of me;
The stained and travelled warriors blessed me,
With cracked and thirsty lips they sang of me;
The little children gleaned me and sang of me.
The Wise Men set my seedtime by the Moon,
And by the Wisdom of the Stars was I reaped;

High or low—they loved me and blessed me,
Gauging the great granaries, they sang of me.

* * *

I am the earth-born Corn. The earth was new
When first I blossomed by the insurgent Nile;
Storms tore and rove my ravelling silks apart,
My glossy awn became a cloud of spears,
The wild birds stole my seed—the earth was old
Before the Gods came down and Isis found me,
To the House of loved Osiris bound me.
I, too, grew strong in the fields of Heaven,
Strong, and taller than the proud Wheat I grew,
The breezes that rocked him rocked me also;
I, too, was reaped by the followers of Horus,
The innocent in the Field of Beans sang hymns to me,
The emancipated Souls partook of me,
Then were the great Bakings and Brewings in Heaven!
I, too, was in the Underworld with royal Ra;
There fields were ploughed for me, my seed was scattered;
There was I gathered and prepared for the Gods,
And for those Shining Souls who grow and live—
Those Souls who are not overturned by Death.
Who have not done evil, whose hearts are made new,
Who eat the cakes of Osiris and drink my spirit.
On earth the sovereign princes tell their wealth, they say,
“Wheat have I in the City of Pu,
And barley in the City of Tepu!”
I was gay in Babylon,
I was glad in Assyria,
I, too, in Egypt can be holy and grave and gay.

* * *

I know the dancing-girls whose lovely pose
And classic airs delight the Pharaoh's Court,

Whose sacred dance tricks out his temple-floors,
Shocking with beauty every solemn rite;
Adoring Queen and Princess for them play
On hallowed cymbal, lute, and tambourine,
I, prone upon the garnished altar lying,
The chosen offering for a God so mute.
And well I love the franker sunnier days
When peasant children dance to see me dance,
When winds caress me and I laugh with those
Who reap, with those who take my Beer about
In the hot sun, the careless girl who goes
Singing and jesting through my ruined fields,
Gleaning and dropping half my ravished gold,
With those who pull my roots, who bind my sheaves,
Who thresh, who winnow out my broken spears—
I laugh with this wise people ages old,
In long precession beating out their joy,
A laughter-loving, care-removing folk
And Death's eternal toy.

Annie Charlotte Dalton

A HALF-CASTE PRAYS

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men
for to dwell on all the face of the earth". . . .

The Acts

"Forgive, O God, the occidental anger
Fomenting through these veins, a seething flood,
Which vies with cool of oriental languor
To form a bristling murk in mongrel blood.

The East and West, though twain, in me commingle,
Yet each reviles me and I brood alone—
The earth affords no corner for my ingle,
No pillow for my head but hatred's stone!

Why must this body, white as any mortal's,
Forever be forsworn by eyes that slant?
Why must this heart-bird dash convention's portals,
Foredoomed as any sea-mad cormorant?

Forgive, O All-Wise Father, if I wonder
Why You Who made of one blood humankind,
Predestined me to be a living blunder
In whom two separate bloods war fiercely blind.

O Christian God, I'd hail this hybrid chrism
As one whom cleansing tongues of fire baptize,
If you would only halt this vengeful schism—
Subdue my soul to match these almond eyes!"

WILD PLUM

I know a wild plum tree
That crests a hilltop trail
With such sublimity
No artist could detail.

When winter's parapet
Of crystal hides gnarled thighs,
With ebon silhouette
It stipples violet skies.

Each spring before the earth
Is velveteed anew,
It etches pink-white birth
Against cornelian blue.

Summer—in high relief
It frets aquamarine
With emerald fruit and leaf—
A symphony in green!

When autumn suns distil
Low-lying sapphire mists,
It proudly crowns the hill
Bejewelled with amethysts!

Gordon LeClaire

THE EVERLASTING TRUMPETS

I

(IN THE BEGINNING)

White were the sheep as the lilies that sway
In a field in the sun beside Eden;
And Abel the shepherd was drowsy that day;
Deep in the long sweet grasses he lay,
And life was good and living was gay
In a field in the sun beside Eden.

But Cain had no eyes for the lilies on the hill,
In a field in the sun beside Eden.
The hate in his heart cried out to him, "Kill,
Feed on your hate of him. Feed to your fill."
So he struck and his brother lay strangely still,
In a field in the sun beside Eden.

There was blood on the lilies that stood in the sun,
In a field in the sun beside Eden.
Not even Cain could know what he had done.
A life had been taken, a field had been won,
God was forgotten and war had begun
In a field in the sun beside Eden.

II

(THE MARCH PAST)

The calling of a trumpeter dispels the ancient night,
And the shadows of the ages move and shift before the light,

As the armies out of Egypt are advancing on the sight.
But the years are only minutes till the Pharaohs all are gone,
And down the old Euphrates sings the name of Babylon,
And Ur of the Chaldeans breeds a mighty fighting spawn;
But Babylon and Egypt, and all the ancient words,
Are transient as shadows and as fleeting as the birds.

The singing fields of Sparta will be horrible and black,
For see across the misty purple Hellespont the pack,—
Xerxes and his Persians with the sunrise at their back.
Up from gleaming Athens by the music-haunted sea,
The lovely men of Greece are marching to Thermopylae,
And sweating men from Sparta will be dying three and three.
The trumpets never finish, though the hearts they thrill are
clay—

For fighting men have always stalwart sons to give away.

Bronze and brass and silver gleam and glimmer in the gloam:
The Caesar and his iron-featured legions out of Rome
Come tramping round the roads of Gaul, a thousand miles from
home.

Trumpets call and quiver on the glooming granite deep
And Britain of the virgin cliffs is wakened out of sleep.
Another home to devastate, another field to reap.
The merry, merry trumpets are the story of the years—
And so are death and pestilence, and muck and blood and tears.

Merry men from England and gallant men from France
Riding to the Holy Land—Cross and torch and lance.
God and glory beckon them, steel and fire glance.
Fire to burn their eyes out, and steel to rip and tear;
Everyone's crusading—all the fools of earth are there.
There's nothing fearless hearts won't do and dauntless spirits
dare.

And it was not Pope or priest who called them out to live and
die,

But the romance of the trumpets in the Oriental sky.

III

(NINETEEN-FOURTEEN)

So the years went down the skies
In peace and war,
Gathering gold in peace and art in massacre
For Armageddon when the peopled earth
Should fight together.
Fear and hatred rotted at the hearts of nations.
One peeped with greedy cunning at another.
And at last, no one knew how or where,
The challenge fell and every hill
Screamed out the ageless triumph of the trumpets,
Flags ran up on every battlement,
And down the dusty roads of earth
The thunder of marching feet went by.

This was no war. Where was the glory?
Where the romance? Where the brave
Red gleam of banners and the bright
White lightning of the lances?
Where was the lustful thrill of the combat?
The singing of swords, and the shrill
Wild shout of the trumpets?
Nothing was left but the killing.
Heaven and earth blazed—
Death was invisible—
Dying was horrible—
Chaos was all,
And there was no tongue
To speak peace.

IV

(PEACE—NINETEEN-TWENTY)

The storm has gone from all the Belgian fields,
And the long thunder is no more heard over Picardy.

The slow rain of four long years has borne its yields
In the good earth of broken Picardy.
Now the lightnings flare no more
Along the heaving hills of France.
The larks have learned to sing again and soar,
And roses all have wakened from their trance.
Far and faint the brazen voices die
Across the world beneath a clearing sky;
The storm has gone from all the Belgian fields,
And the long thunder is no more heard over Picardy.

V

(NINETEEN-THIRTY-SEVEN)

Has Picardy forgotten? Will the days
Again be awful with the cursed haze?
Oh Picardy, a million crosses cry
Remembrance. Can the memory die?
And can the trumpets drown the dread
Deep song of all your millions dead?
Of what frail dust is man begotten?
Picardy, have you forgotten?

VI

(THE EVERLASTING TRUMPETS)

For half a million years the bugles blew
And drums repeated. They shall never rust
For want of playing till the days are dust
And trumpets blow the final great tattoo.
I know the days of war are never through;
I know to-morrow will again be lust;
But for to-day I would be blind and just
Pretend that men have peaceful hearts and true.

Before they start the grinding of the sword
There is a little work I haven't done.
I have a book to read to-day, oh Lord. . .
And there's a poem I have just begun.
To-morrow let the trumpets wake to play,
But . . . God . . . let them be quiet . . . for to-day.

Fred E. Laight

PRAIRIE AUTUMN

This is the time the spacious prairie broods,
Holding all loneliness within her haze;
Tangles of dead weeds edge the dying fields,
A silence falls like death upon the days.
No colour here save brown of prairie sod,
And red-gold leaves upon the withered brush,
And blood-red berries of the roses' dead,
And far-flung sunset in the evening's hush.
Nothing like this wide stretch of wheatlands vast
Is found in any land, in any part;
Nothing can give the same still mystery—
That hand that lays cold fingers on the heart.
Sunset may burn all round the horizon's rim,
And the blue dome of sky spread overhead,
Not these can lift the pall from such sad days,
There is no refuge; all the year is dead.
Waiting the kindness of snow-mantle white
The Autumn prairie broods—its ancient right.

Clara E. Hill

PRAIRIE CANDLES

The spired sun rode down to-night
Between attending spears of light;
Giant prairie candles cold,
Lighted from his flaming gold.

Candles that Great Mantou burns
For hunter who no more returns,
 For runner lost and sachem slain
 In ancient hazards of the plain.

For courage that could not prevail
Against misfortunes of the trail,
 And whited things, whate'er their kind,
 The mocking blizzard leaves behind.

The prairie candles hang on high,
And flank the sun across the sky
 For all who gave, with toil and tears,
 Their forfeit to the coming years.

Ella M. Davis

COLD NIGHT

Said the frost fiendishly:
The moon is so big and cold
That if I beat upon it with my doubled hands,
It will ring like a gong and waken the world.

And if I take a handful of those brittle stars
And hurl them across the blue metal sky,
They will crash
And splinter
And scatter fire upon the snow.

* * *

The prairie heard
In her sleep;
Stirred,
Opened one eye;

Murmured drowsily:
Mercury still going down?

And slept again,
Unalarmed.

Freda McArton

AT HOME TO NOVEMBER

November, there is tribute I would bring.
First, taper to this wood, a breath of June
Unprison from my jar, and then a rune.
Come, sit with me, about your shoulders fling
This popped shawl from Spain—a precious thing.
We two have much in common, hearts attune
In penuries untold: a famished moon,
A wastrel sun, and many a faithless wing.

November, gallant-hearted, doomed to bear
Within your bosom ravaged beauty's cry;
To play your broken reed against despair
When empty arms are lifted to the sky;
To you, this little gift, my shawl to wear,
My popped shawl. You need it more than I.

Kathryn Munro

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The girl they named Serena grew,
as all too often children do,
by phases, hoydenish and wild,
a rollicking, rambunctious child
whose spindly legs and carrot hair
were seen here, there, and everywhere.

So singularly lacking grace!
A hundred freckles on her face!
Her treble voice, too sharp and shrill,
was heard for blocks and seldom still.
She vied with boys for batter's rights,
complained at being called in nights
when all her gang were roasting "dogs",
or hunting treasure, catching frogs,
or playing run-sheep-run. You see
to her such sport was ecstasy.

But then she changed. Quite suddenly
she learned to hold a cup of tea,
discuss, in dulcet tones, new books,
the weather, temperamental cooks,
the latest talkie. And her hair
in sculptured curls like screen-stars wear
set off wide eyes of grayish-green.
Her manner would become a queen.
The freckles faded from her face,
and, the epitome of grace,
she passed from arm to arm. No dance
complete without her! Then, by chance,
this maid, a man, a moon above,
the green light on the road to love—

now, as a million others do,
they'll name their girl Serena too.

Gloria Lauriston

SEA SAND

Crushed by the footsteps of a million years,
These yellow sands yield slowly to the dust,
They that had once beneath the shining spheres
Shaped granite mountains on the earth's bare crust.
Molten were they, in chaos wildly torn,
Throughout the travail of a world new-born.

And now the great waves wash their pebbled thrones,
Leaving no record of the ageless past,
They lie quiescent in their sheltered zones
Beneath the turbulence of waters vast.
They know the forces of the winds unfurled,
And tides that sweep the shore-lines of the world.

Elizabeth Donaldson

ACCENT RESERVED

Once we were content with bright madrigals
Unblurred by rain. Once we held to the nightingale
Symbol of poignancy, faintly overtone, yet brimmed
To fall with a hint of pain. Now we are left

To trace strident dissonance in every line;
Mount discord upon discord; cumber with jarring stones
A toppling house no scaffold can avail.
And yet—in darkened after-silence, strange harmonies prevail.

But only thro' this—that prescience lies
In the long trek that began with the sun;
Stratas of blood and bone, scratched walls that lift us
Relentlessly out of the sea, whence we have come.

Forty

Still, though moons curve out to full, opulent gold,
And grass grows high, is cut, and mutely returned,
Pastures will show alien brown, sand flick thro' the green—
Lo, weariness holds in fief a vast and barren dream.

Now be it for us to urge a quickened tempo, cling tight,
And lengthen our stride. Over dusty cobblestones
Greet daybreak, tutored to passwords irrefragable,
Clearer prisms to sift the murmured cadence into singing tides.

Somehow—as grave, dark-browed trees brood upward,
We, too, accept a joyousness resilient but incomplete;
Forego the rainbow's fulfilment; lift steady faces to the sun;
Push on, remembering a day is yet to be won.

T. Negoro

ELINOR

The summer lacquered the land in gold
And winter sped in silver and blue:
Change only mirrored her great unrest—
No lover's kiss the maiden knew.

Dreams and wishes. What were they?
The leaven of life but not the sweet.
And the wind would grieve that the days were long;
Only the nights of rest were fleet.

But across the world an uncharted road
Lay with its ending at her door.
And down its mystical ways there came
One on a quest—for Elinor.

Over the seas and the years he came,
Through conflict, joy, defeat, and power,
Wending toward he knew not where
To keep the tryst of a visioned hour.

Forty-one

And while she waited him she sang
The songs that throbbed from the caravan
Of dreamers passing over the earth
Under the fluting spell of Pan.

O lyric love that would upward surge
When a clasping hand and a single word
Assuaged desire and filled her soul
With a psalm too holy to be heard.

O welling joy that would brim and pour
As the golden cup of the morning sun,
When she heard his voice and their separate souls
Died and arose again as one.

But when on an April day she leaned—
Under his lips she leaned at last—
And their love outgrew the bounds of the world,
A child looked up at them and passed.

A. Gwendolen Merrin

BREAD

My new-made bread
Nut-brown and fragrant from the oven heat
Bears witness of my labouring to-day,
Whilst in my ears the noisy binder tells
Of men and horses straining at their toil
In quest of it, their sought-for daily bread.
"You should take some of this", a poet dreamer said
"And purchase hyacinths"; but I the worker sigh,
"There are so few things hyacinths can do
Which are required of these plain loaves of mine
And ev'ry one of them is asked of me."
Then in rebellion thoughtlessly I cry,
"Lord of all Loveliness, didst thou forget

Man's beauty-hunger, teaching him to pray
With brave humility for only bread?"
As if to answer me, my aimless gaze
Turns to a near-by field, where ripening wheat
Head-bowed at benediction of the sun
Stands proudly firm, with sacramental calm
To wait the coming sacrifice of Fall.

And once again I see that rolling plain
Clothed as the bride of Winter, frost-begemmed
And blushing at the consciousness of Heaven,
Sobered by early thaw but jewelled yet
With countless pools of rich celestial colouring;
Till dawned the miracle when man-sown grain
Quickened by touch divine, kept faith with Spring
And robed her in the joy of the new-born.
I sensed her deep-drawn ecstasy when June
Crowned her green splendour with a rainbow arc
And turned the gleaming verdure of her leaves
To water, ray-illuminated as the sea.
And now this hour of golden rapture reigns
Where light is glory, shadow, soothing loveliness.
Change this for hyacinths! As well compare
Youth's dimpled daintiness with that immortal charm
Born of the spirit, nurtured of the soul;
Hope with achievement, or the wayside brook
And limpid pool to ocean-majesty!
For a great heart of beauty pulses here
In this dear striving land, a truth sublime,
Man and his maker working side by side
With staunch courageousness that mankind may be fed.
For virile strength, and Life's undying wonder, Lord,—
Give us THY bread.

D. L. Saunders

IN MEMORIAM PATRIS
(THOMAS BENSON, 1870-1937)

I

Farewell, my father; nobly now, farewell;
The game of life is done,
The last strong inning played,
And in the setting sun the crowd departs,
While you, of old, the last man turning home,
Stand smiling in the green deserted field.
Peace and the dark come down,
The stars shine out
And quietly the moon
Rides high in an untroubled heaven.

II

Farewell, my father,
Fond and strong farewell!
May Death's dark garland be my deathless hope
That God might give to all the sons of earth
As strong and noble sire
As he who fathered me,
Steadfast in sorrow, broad-awake in mirth,
A memory heart-full in happiness and scope.

III

No single hour of sorrow will ever come
Throbbing its muffled drum,
No saddening yesterday can ever mar
Or blight my rich to-morrow
Woven of a million filial memories,
That like the couchant August sun, come streaming far
From those dim-shrouded hills

To shed a mellow, warm, and golden glow,
Heartening the duskèd skies,
Brightening the tear-gemmed eyes
And goldening all Death's silver river-flow,
Until it moves like flame
Flame from the Son, the Lord, the Giver of the Same
Enkindled in Love's everlasting name.

IV

Here Death is nothing dread,
Since here he brings so little of the night,
And nothing of a hollow sundering strife.
All that he brought
To set life's bitter final hours at naught
Seems like a splendid frame
To fit the picture of a perfect day,
A full life richly lived, of work and play.
Pictures my father loved, yet seldom made,
But now in truth arrayed,
He fronts the Great Judge Who envalues all,
Who takes the canvas 'neath my father's arm
That father scarcely seemed to know was there.
Swiftly its wrappings fall,
Shed is its sable pall
And in God's Hand strong glory is displayed.
Those great and august Eyes that burn like Suns
Glow, full of love:
"Untaught, my son, your soul's fine brush hath limned
This landscape of a lovely life undimmed
By any lesser line,
Or hurried flawed design;
From Virtue's palette never a hue is dimmed;
Nothing is here but truly noble art,
Well wrought it is in every worthy part.

Devoid of all that bears the Tempter's sign,
This work-of-life you made is Mine to keep
For My own galleried mansions rich and deep,
Where I may treasure what was always Mine.
With work well done, take now your joyous way
Out to the field where earlier comrades play."

V

And now fleet fielders strike their folded gloves
To welcome him whose prowess ever moves
The talk of those who linger when the longest game is done,
The extra-innings played, the strenuous victory won.
Not Death's, but Life's, this ground,
As now he takes the mound
Fingering the ball, as always, strong and fair.
Now he looks bravely in the batter's eye;
The ball is life; he holds it in his hand,
Raises his splendid arm,
Smiles toward the stand.
Unruffled, strong, and calm,
He throws it through the centre straight and true,
And a great cheer comes thundering from the stand
As he begins to play on fresher fields and new.

Nathaniel A. Benson

May 30, 1937.

MAGIC

Red shoes, red shoes, on my slender feet;
Night and I alone here in the cobbled street—
And all the mad gaiety of red slippered feet!

The young wind tugs at my fly-away gown
And whirls me high through the tall gabled town
While all my tangled hair comes tumbling down!

Red shoes, red shoes, what do you seek
Past the narrow docks where the old boards creak
And a low-moored ship sways its gloomy peak?

Will we find the wizard waiting in the dawn?
Standing with a mountaineer belt buckled on?
O where has the blue-eyed wizard gone?

Red shoes, red shoes, through the market square—
While dark towers bend sharp roofs to stare!
Is the brown wizard man still waiting there?

I passed all the stalls to the last empty row;
O where do the blue-eyed wizards go?
When the moon is crusted with late spring snow?

Red shoes, red shoes, no one here to meet!
Only night and I in my gay-shod feet—
And the warm red echo clinging to the street.

Miriam Dorne

SELF-SCULPTURE

I pressed my face into soft clay,
And when I took my face away,
The lines began to swim and blend,
And clay straightway began to mend.

I carved my image in a rock,
And all my faults were there to mock,
And captured in relentless stone,
They stood imprisoned, chained, to moan.

I once again took yielding clay,
One moment let my image stay,
Looked at the errors, then erased,
Then countless images I traced.

The clay let error lightly go,
But treated virtue even so,
And failed to keep the ardent line
Of moulded graces hard and fine.

I turned once more to carven stone,
Avowed the likeness as my own,
Hacked at the faults to set them free,
And called the battered remnant me.

Stella Falk

THROUGH A TANGLE

Abigail dwelt
In a tottering shack,
Where the woods were thick
And the swamp was black ;

An old recluse
In a dull hemp gown
Who never ventured
Towards the town.

The years uncurled,
And Abigail peered
Through a tangle of growth
That the forest reared

But little wandering
Children knew
That the berries there
Were as bitter as rue.

Once Abigail waved
Her hand and smiled,
And called to an idling
Friendly child.

She caught him close,
And shook her head.
"There was a dreadful
War," she said.

He screamed, and ran
To his friends in the glade,
But they told him
Not to be afraid ;

For what could Abigail
Know of war—
Or what troops fought
Each other for? . . .

A grisled hag,
With vacant eyes,
And a laugh like a hinge
That the storm-wind pries?

That day a robin
Came to nest
In the gaping shack
As Abigail's guest.

She watched him building
On a shelf,
As she lay by the door
And talked to herself.

Then moonlight came
To gild the wall,
And a bird nestled home . . .
But that was all.

The fingers of light
Crept over the room
Now Sabbath-calm,
And as cold as a tomb . . .

Fingers of light
On a couch of moss,
Where an old woman clutched
A Victoria Cross.

Jessie Playfair Bickford

TIDE SPELL

By my house on the rock-toothed point
The tide goes on.
Beaten turquoise, bottle-green—
Gray as the last dread dawn
And as each broad wave turns
Silver is shattered into an endless print
Of broken scales.
The tide goes on. . . .
I sit on the salted rocks and watch it pass;
Until my eyes swim with the eternal flow
Forward and back, forward and back again.
My ears hear night and day
The endless rushing rustle of the sea;
Through all night's dreams
The tide goes on. . . .
My house may fall and mould,
I shall be fallen and these eyes and ears
Part of this shore—and yet
The tide goes on. . . .
A million years gone past—to come
After my little flash.
But forward—back—forward and back again,
Still leafed with silver on its fruitless waves,
The tide goes on.

Anne Marriott

ACOLYTE

Farther than sorrow goes or sighs can venture,
Where even laughter fades and vows are vacant,
Where colours drain and leave the sky forsaken,
My quest has led me, lured me, seeking, seeking.

The tulip petals of the morning sunlight,
The blue deep shadows of a pine at evening,
And trees in rain and windy-riding moonlight—
All these You bade me leave:
They are abandoned.

I loved all these and now I love You only
You high, august, cold, and serenely lonely.
I would have blessed Your feet with tears, Your hands with
 kisses.
For God, stoop down. My garlands wither, wither.

Joyce Marshall

TO A YOUNG MAN PLOUGHING
NEAR AN OLD BURYING-LOT

Shade them gently from the sun—
Pioneers whose work is done.

Guard the birds that in the trees
Make their olden melodies.

Pick the pinks and mignonette
And the double violet

Into bunches sweet with dew,
Lay them at their feet . . . and you

Doff your cap, lad—they below
Loved this land—long, long ago!

Ella H. Eckel

TO A YOUNG LADY

What is your substance? whereof are you made,
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
What is your soul that in your body rayed
Can there a million-gleaming radiance lend?

Like down high-blown you know not you are seed,
And feel no kindred but the air and sun;
Where chance had moored you ill, now softly freed
I see you rise, and flight anew begun.

Unhappy flight! For winds are barren kin,
And makeless are their vagrant ecstasies:
Dull Earth is kind; let bluff Rain bear you in
To her warm hearth and homely energies!

For seed must fall, and lay its glamour by,
Ere it can build a solemn beauty high.

Lawrence A. Anderson

GRATEFULLY

I thank the gods that in my heart
Lies a lute with slackened strings
That yet may hymn my great desire
Or song beyond imaginings.

I thank the gods that in my mind
Lie sleeping, by its subtle springs,
Thoughts whose flashing light and shade
Brighten the mystery of things.

If Attic gods should search my soul
And bring its hidden essence up,
At times I feel that even they
Might quench their thirst in this new cup.

Fifty-three

I thank what gods have given me
This my lute with slackened string,
Whose melody can lift the heart
To hurdle any vengeful thing.

Deep in my deeps I take my ease
At peace with groups and creeds and things,
Nor cry for unreturning nights,
Nor yearn to stretch my sum of springs.

E. V. Shute

THE OCEAN LIES BETWEEN

You are sitting on the sands;
I, too, am by the sea,
But the lone land and the long years
Lie between you and me. . . .
Like laughter left at twilight
And drowned at dawn in tears.

Hilma Parsons

SONG

She has a lovely voice,
Like apple-blossoms falling,
White petals softly falling;
Like wind along the grass,
Or far-off thrushes calling.

I heard her slow, sweet words,
One silent autumn even,
One still, blue autumn even;
It was as though a star
Had blossomed new in heaven.

Margaret E. McGregor

NOCTURNE: "CLOUDS"—DEBUSSY

The floating clouds make music as they pass—
Thin luminous veils drawn back from the awaking moon,
Shreds of gossamer, drifting—
Music whose faint sound seems woven of light.
Nearer, frail wisps move on, moon-drenched;
Grey shadows, deepening, flow by.

Distant, low, the thunder bourdon rolls;
Thick shades in hurrying waves strew darkness
dim as waving cypress boughs.

Scatter of raindrops
Have set a campanile of flower-bells quivering,
Swaying soundlessly,
Soundlessly mingling with mystic unheard voices of the night.
Drifting, dissolving, the dense shades disappear;
Shadows following gather gleams of pearl
From the moon's pearl-bright face.

The floating clouds pass by—
Vibrations, delicate, ethereal,
Reach a rare, delicate ear.

Florence Westacott

NEWS NOTES OF CONTRIBUTORS

As our last issue, Vol. 2, No. 2, was largely made up of poems from established writers, we did not print our usual news notes, but now for the purpose of keeping a complete tabulation we list the names of those who appeared for the first time:

Sir Charles G. D. Roberts, Toronto; Wilson Macdonald, at present in Ottawa; Charles Bruce, formerly of Halifax, now with the *Canadian Press*, Toronto; A. M. Stephen, Vancouver; Florence Randal Livesay, Clarkson, Ont.; Charles Clay, Literary Editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*; and the late Constance Davies Woodrow, who for many years was a prominent writer in Toronto.

The following contributors in this issue are new to the magazine:

Gordon LeClaire, of Montreal, whose poem "A Half-Caste Prays" won two prizes in the recent Calgary Poetry Group competition.

D. L. Saunders; Miss Ella M. Davis; Fred E. Laight, all of Regina, Sask.

Stella Falk (Mrs. Henry Falk), Toronto.

Miss Joyce Marshall, a short story writer, formerly of Westmount, Que., now of Toronto.

Miss Margaret E. McGregor, Bowmanville, Ont.

Lawrence A. Anderson, Weston, Ont.

Dr. E. V. Shute, London, Ont.

Mrs. E. H. Eckel, St. Thomas, Ont.

Miss Miriam Dorne, Ottawa.

Miss Hilma Parsons, New Westminster, B.C.

We Want
a Thousand
New » »
Subscribers

SPECIAL OFFER

One free subscription will be given for every five new subscriptions secured by any individual. This is an opportunity for friends of Canadian Poetry to receive a free subscription by securing five new subscribers at \$2.00 per year. Help the magazine and get this bonus.

•

CANADIAN
POETRY
MAGAZINE

P.O. Box 491
Station F
TORONTO

Just Published!

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETRY

by

PROFESSOR
NICHOL SMITH

Every reader of the Canadian Poetry Magazine will wish to add this book to his or her library.

The volume covers the three Alexander Lectures delivered at the University of Toronto by Professor Nichol Smith of Oxford University.

Professor Smith's reputation guarantees the reader that his observations will be decidedly worth while.

\$1.50 Post paid

THE UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO PRESS
TORONTO - CANADA



GIVE CANADIAN POETRY THIS CHRISTMAS

Just off the Press

LLOYD ROBERTS—I Sing of Life.....	\$2.00
HARRY AMOSS—Prayer of a Good Trouper.....	\$2.00
WILFRED CAMPBELL—Poems.....	\$2.00
BLISS CARMAN—The Music of Earth.....	\$1.50
BLISS CARMAN AND LORNE PIERCE	
Our Canadian Literature.....	\$3.00
GEORGE HERBERT CLARKE—The Hasting Day....	\$1.50
ANNIE CHARLOTTE DALTON—Lilies and Leopards	\$2.00
WILLIAM HENRY DRUMMOND	
The Habitant and Other Poems.....	\$1.75
CECIL FRANCIS LLOYD—Landfall.....	\$1.50
J. E. H. MacDONALD—West by East.....	\$1.50
WILSON MacDONALD—The Song of the Prairie Land	\$1.50
TOM MacINNIS—Complete Poems.....	\$2.50
SIR CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS—Selected Poems....	\$2.00
THEODORE GOODRIDGE ROBERTS	
The Leather Bottle.....	\$2.00
ROBERT W. SERVICE—Collected Verse.....	\$3.00
FRANCIS SHERMAN—Complete Poems.....	\$3.00
ALBERT DURRANT WATSON—Poetical Works.....	\$3.00

Chap-Books

NATHANIEL BENSON—The Wanderer.....	\$1.00
HELENA COLEMAN—Songs.....	.75
LEO COX—River Without End.....	.60
WILLIAM THOW—More Odd Measures.....	.60

THE RYERSON PRESS
TORONTO